MANITOBA:

PROGRESS IN LITERACY

Manitoba
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MANITOBA: PROGRESS IN LITERACY

INTRODUCTION

Manitoba: Progress in Literacy provides the context for adult literacy provision, both national and provincial, as well as present developments and future strategies for Manitoba. Since the Federal governments' 1981 withdrawal of CEIC funding for all adult upgrading below the grade 8 level, responsibility for adult literacy provision fell almost entirely to the voluntary sector. In 1984, the Minister of Education devolved provincial responsibility for adult literacy to the Adult and Continuing Education Branch. An allocation was made to the branch to provide small grants under the New Initiatives Program, a system of grants to organizations and communities to support literacy provision.

The initial intent of the New Initiatives Program has undergone modification in the four years since its inception as information and feedback are received from the programs. As the field of adult literacy provision was a relatively new one in Canada, programs were, of necessity, experimental. Because of the flexibility which Manitoba has enjoyed, the shape of provision and of infrastructure development has resulted in some outcomes which are being incorporated by other provinces.

Future strategies are for strengthening, supporting and disseminating successful practice in the field. In addition, linkages with other program providers and institutions, while nascent at this time, are planned for the future so that an integrated system of quality adult education can exist which is responsive to the needs of the adult learner and the communities.

1.0 Background: History and Development

With the year 1990 identified as the International Year of Literacy, both the public and private sectors are increasingly aware of the need to develop responsive, appropriate educational programs for adult learners with basic reading and writing needs. Alarm over the high rate of adult illiteracy (by UNESCO's definition, one in five or 183,000 Manitobans) is not new: Since World War II there has been a call for increasing the cognitive skills of literacy and numeracy to fit the demands of an increasingly technologically sophisticated society. The belief in a particular economic relationship between education and employment, known as human capital theory, became the rationale for the structure of Federal provision of manpower training in the 1960's. As a result, until the early 1980's, the primary source of adult education programming was through Canada Manpower training programs, in which academic upgrading was offered in conjunction with skills training.

The notion that individuals are unemployed because they lack the requisite academic skills for the available jobs, although largely discounted by economists in the past decade due to growing evidence to the contrary, has continued to inform political decisions regarding adult basic education provision. While there <u>is</u> a high correlation between illiteracy and poverty, the relationship is not a causal one: illiteracy does not <u>cause</u> poverty, but rather, if one is poor it is more likely that one will have suffered other disadvantages as well.

However, by the 1970's, the academic upgrading component of training institutions grew to more than 50% of the programs offered. In 1981, citing the provinces' responsibility for education, Ottawa withdrew all funding for academic upgrading below grade 8. Since then, adult education programming for adults with less than a grade 8 was primarily delivered through the voluntary sector (which operates largely in Winnipeg), with occasional short-term programming through the community colleges and the urban school divisions' continuing education departments. The latter institutional programs usually have a fixed curriculum and are based mainly on upgrading related to developing employability skills or attainment of high school equivalency diplomas.

While the means for adults ready and willing to access educational opportunities missed previously are undeniably important, the inadequacies of these approaches for students functioning below a grade 9 level or looking for more broad educational experiences have been well demonstrated. In addition, over 50% of the adults entering programs state that they wish to learn to read and write for reasons other than employment. Students with school failure experiences or

inadequate reading and writing skills are also not likely to join educational programs of this nature. In fact, in a 1979 report to the Ford Foundation on adult illiteracy in the United States, it was estimated that of the population of adults who could objectively be considered illiterate (having less than grade 9), no more than 5% would enter the more conventionally-structured classroom-based programs. If we are to tackle the literacy needs of undereducated aboriginal and nonaboriginal adults, particularly those in rural and remote areas of the province, the need for a community response becomes evident.

For the past four years, the Province has been attempting to address this issue through the Adult and Continuing Education Branch (A.C.E.). Under a program entitled the New Initiatives Program (NIP), small grants (totalling $120.0 in FY87/88) were made available to communities to develop approaches to literacy provision consonant with community-identified needs (see Appendix II). Where appropriate, programs were developed in conjunction with school divisions which were able, in some cases, to secure supplementary funding through Evening School grants. However, in instances where cooperative programming was not feasible, alternative models of community-based provision were developed.

While the original model of community-based programming attempted in Manitoba was the one-to-one volunteer tutor model, it quickly became evident that this was not suitable for all communities, particularly remote communities experiencing high rates of unemployment. Due to the enormous complex of problems confronting the adult illiterate (high rates of unemployment, unsuccessful and negative school experiences, mislabelling and misdiagnosing, alienation), the need for sensitive, creative and committed teaching is of paramount concern; no more would we entrust the literacy development of our children solely to volunteers, than we ought to entrust the burden of adult literacy development solely to volunteers.

Therefore, in attempting to develop appropriate models of provision, a variety of successful initiatives were supported, all of which had in common a commitment to:

- involving the community in the organization and evaluation of the program;
- the principles of adult literacy work (See Section 2);
- being learner and learning-centered, stemming from the identified needs of the individual and the community;
- delivery by a team of paid part-time trained workers.

Previously, Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) programs, the curriculum and structure of which were developed without the

input of communities, were "parachuted" into communities with little in the way of advance preparation. Despite the enormous amount of funding committed to these programs in the 1970's, their focus was extremely narrow as they were targetted only for unemployed disadvantaged youth. In a sense, the programs were condensed versions of conventionally-structured high school programs in which the youth had already experienced failure. With the programs' student allowances, they became in effect, another mechanism for income transfer payments. Moreover, the programs did not capitalize on the obvious strength of role modelling by adults of any age returning to learn.

It has become apparent that community "ownership" and control of programming might have more success. Obviously, this approach demands that the providers (in this case the A.C.E. Branch) have experienced community workers as well as expert literacy trainers as part of the organizational team to develop literacy work. Before the work can succeed, the community needs to understand the differences between this approach and that offered by schools or community colleges so that their choice is an informed one. Without this groundwork and development of community support, literacy programs cannot succeed and learners will experience one more round of failure.

Our experience over the past four years has also demonstrated the difficulties with one-year funding for programs. We have found that it takes a minimum of three years for a program to take root in a community, particularly as the principles and the aims of truly community-directed and community-delivered programs are a new conceptualization of adult education for the majority of communities. The difficulties of developing programs in small communities which have never had significant community educational programs are magnified by the inequities of short-term funding. This concern was echoed by the former Secretary of State, David Crombie, in his announcement of the Department of the Secretary of State's new mandate in adult literacy.

In the past year, the Department of the Secretary of State became an actor in the field of adult literacy work by providing grants to programs and groups in the provinces and the territories. Of the $1M allocated by the Department of the Secretary of State, $100.0 was granted to 10 programs on reserves and two provincial organizations in Manitoba. The A.C.E. Branch was responsible for the development, training and evaluation of the programs, a situation which caused enormous difficulties for staff given the speed at which the grants were announced and disbursed. It is unclear at present as to the future of the Secretary of State's commitment to literacy, although it is likely that there will be additional funding allocated in FY89/90. However, to avoid a repetition of this year's situation, a situation replicated to varying degrees in the other

three western provinces, a conference call was held between provincial government counterparts responsible for adult literacy in order that a coordinated and coherent response to the Secretary of State's initiative be developed.

2.0 PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LITERACY WORK

Educational responses to adult learners with literacy needs has grown in both the Third World and industrialized nations. The experience of some European countries and the U.S. have demonstrated emerging principles which govern community literacy work. While these principles are not fixed and may be adjusted through further experience and evaluation, they do seem to be consistent with the current research and developments.

2.1 Learner-controlled learning

In adult literacy programs decision-making about the content, methodology and learning approaches must be negotiated between the tutor/teacher and the learner. Unless the learner feels s/he controls the learning, all the previous confusions, anxieties, and negative experiences about school will inhibit the learning process. If the learner negotiates the curriculum ,the issues of motivation and relevance are inherently solved.

2.2 Adult-based learning

Teaching adults is not the same as teaching children. The educational system, teachers and students need to be aware of this. Adult students must be treated with respect in the knowledge they bring different skills and experiences to the learning process which may help the teacher and learner in planning the learning program.

Adult based learning takes into consideration the time, energy, level of learning development, goals, and interests of the learner. A learning program is planned with the learner that suits his/her needs and desires. Tutors/teachers talk openly to the students about past negative experiences and potential blocks or impediments to learning which might continue to plague the student.

2.3 Indefinite time limits

Adult literacy work presumes that all learners work at different speeds and levels. Consolidation of previously learned material may take longer for some students. In addition, adult learners have a variety of home and family commitments to which they are bound. Since learners are encouraged to assess and evaluate their own work, how far or how fast the learner progresses is determined by the learner.

2.4 Evaluation is negotiated

Evidence of adult literacy experience in Europe and England indicates that testing adults for grade levels or school achievement is a totally inadequate method for determining previous success in learning. Therefore, testing as a determinate for placement is not encouraged in adult literacy work, but rather, diagnostic assessment which can help both the teacher and the learner understand the processes and strategies being used. Observation and analysis of student performance is emphasized so that both the teacher and learner can better understand where to start and develop sensible goals to achieve in the short and long term.

The student is encouraged to evaluate his or her work in light of the learning objectives, interests, time available to study, and personal demands on time and energy. Progress in reading and writing is qualitatively rather than quantitatively assessed.

2.5 Development of a permanent, paid group of workers

Research in literacy has demonstrated the limitations of exclusively using volunteers in literacy work. (See Appendix III). Because literacy work is considered to be an emerging field needing professional expertise, providers are committed to recruiting, training and supporting a field of workers who will make adult literacy work their chosen occupation.

2.6 Professional development of the teaching staff is critical

We have recognized that literacy workers have a complex, demanding job to do, therefore, developing professional expertise among the workers is of paramount importance. Regular training experiences that also involve supervision of the work is seen by both the field and the agencies providing literacy as imperative to their professional development.

Literacy workers need to know more about developing materials which are culturally relevant to the learners, teaching techniques and strategies, the learning process and explaining it to others, educational counselling and student progress, assessment and evaluation, learning disabilities, integrating special needs students into the learning situation, etc. These are only a few of the emerging needs and interests of literacy workers. As the work develops, course content and skills needed will also become clearer.

2.7 Recruitment of teachers from the community

In order to be successful, teachers must be seen to be part of the community, able to understand the needs of community members and sensitive to local issues. It is not only an issue of equity, but educationally sound for teachers to be also members of the community. Therefore, recruitment and training of aboriginal literacy workers should be an integral part of literacy work.

2.8 Commitment to language experience approach

The methodology of adult literacy work stems from a psycholinguistic approach to the development of reading and writing skills. The language of the student is utilized through a variety of learning experiences which include:

- learning to read via student writing
- involving students in the publication of their writing
- spelling programs derived from the student's writing
- comparing mother tongue languages and/or varieties of English to analyze variances

2.9 Commitment to education vs. "schooling"

Adult literacy theory presumes that learners will probably have experienced failure or have had negative school experiences. Adult literacy work, therefore, seeks to raise the awareness of learners about the wider spectrum of opportunities that adult education can afford them and limitations of "schooling". The learning milieu need not be limited to either school physical settings, e.g. sitting at desks in rows, or certain fixed learning strategies or approaches, rather, students are encouraged to develop learning approaches and strategies that <u>work for them</u>.

2.10 Providers will be responsive to the field

Adult literacy work assumes the coordinators, teachers and organizers will be responsive to the needs of the learners. This includes flexible timing of both teaching and training experiences. While forward planning and priority setting for programs is important, ability to respond quickly and effectively is also a necessary component of organizing the work. Thus, flexibility in offering classes is reflected in flexibility in offering training times and experiences.

3.0 CURRENT STATUS

During FY87-88, the A.C.E. Branch provided small grants to 14 literacy programs, 11 of which are located in rural communities. Because the level of funding allocation remained virtually the same for three fiscal years, the grants have only covered part-time teacher hours (6 hours per week in many cases) and a restricted materials budget. Thus, the numbers of students served and the variety of provision offered was limited. This in no way reflected a lack of interest on the part of learners or the communities, but was entirely due to the lack of available funds. In fact, requests for programming exceeded the available funding by a factor of ten.

Adult and Continuing Education also helped develop 10 literacy programs funded for a short period of time by the Department of the Secretary of State. In the fall of 1987, the Secretary of State announced his intention to make adult literacy a mandate of his department. The Department then asked each province to submit a proposal for funding. Although the need for literacy programs on reserves is well documented, the inadequacies of short term funding and planning are borne out by our experience this year. If communities are isolated and have lacked educational supports, a tremendous amount of community development work must be done prior to the initiation of a program. This takes time, resources, and energy and future federal-provincial agreements must make provision for this.

Many of the programs are enthusiastically supported by both the communities and the students. Some excellent examples are those offered in St. Lazare/Binscarth and Powerview. A more detailed listing of both provincially-funded and Secretary of State-funded programs can be found in **Appendix IV**.

3.1 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD

3.1.1 Learners conference

An annual Learners Conference has been held in Winnipeg for the past three years. (See **Appendix V** for conference report.) These conferences have been developed through consultation with learners and have been highly successful. Other provinces and the territories are interested in emulating the model used by Manitoba and have sent representation to the conferences. At present, our advice and recommendations are being sought in order that similar approaches might be developed elsewhere.

3.1.2 Interprovincial tutor training manual and videotapes

A tutor training manual and accompanying videotapes were developed as a cooperative venture between Manitoba (A.C.E. Branch) and Alberta (Further Education and ACCESS). At present, the manual and tapes are being piloted in Manitoba in an inmate tutoring program recently initiated at Headingly Correctional Institution. It is planned that the comprehensive package will form the core for ongoing tutor and teacher adult literacy training with all community groups. The package has recently been purchased by Ontario and is being considered by other provinces as well.

3.1.3 Community development videotape

Developed in cooperation with the Popular Theatre Alliance of Manitoba, the Department of the Secretary of State and a local film-maker, the videotape is intended as an introduction to the types of literacy programming sponsored by the A.C.E. Branch. Copies of the tape were made available to organizers and teachers in the various communities with extant programs or in the process of planning programs. The tape consists of interviews with learners and teachers in programs in St. Lazare, Camperville, Winnipeg and Brandon and is intended largely for recruitment of learners and generation of community support. To date, it has been overwhelmingly successful and further requests have come from Newfoundland, Ontario, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and British Columbia.

3.1.4 Development of appropriate evaluation measures

As a response to requests from practitioners and as a means by which communities can begin to develop the skills and abilities to think effectively about program planning and evaluation, a Good Practice Guide was developed and piloted in two programs. The Guide is still in the developmental stage, but the results of the piloting have demonstrated its potential efficacy. The A.C.E. Branch hopes to make the Guide an integral part of program development, so that it serves a formative as well as summative function.

In addition, several learner evaluation methods have been attempted. Given the nature of the teachers/tutors availalbe in many communities, the criteria for the evaluation are that it be culturally fair, and easily administered, as well as providing data useful to the teacher/tutor and learner.

3.1.5 Development of language awareness materials

Virtually all of the learners in adult literacy programs either speak a variety of English other than "Standard" English or have a language other than English (generally an aboriginal

language) as their mother tongue. The effect of these two influences on the reading comprehension and writing of the learners, particularly when they enroll in high school upgrading courses or post-secondary institutions, has led to a number of misunderstandings and misdirected educational practices intended to remediate the situation.

An approach has been developed within the A.C.E. Branch which is intended to help the learner become "self"-conscious of the structure and meaning of his or her own language or variety of English (**Appendix VI**). By first affirming the learner's own language work, the comparison to another variety of English, i.e. "Standard English", becomes a source of empowerment, rather than a source of frustration and helplessness. An initial workshop, using materials being developed for this work, was overwhelmingly successful.

Continuing to develop and strengthen the materials is of paramount concern. We hope to pilot the materials in the coming year with learners and teachers representing a wide variety of communities and needs. If the materials and approach are as successful as indicated by the limited testing, we intend to provide them to colleges and possibly, universities.

3.1.6 Provincial funding of programs on reserves

Funding of programs for adults on reserves, an example of the federal off-loading debate, has resulted in little being done since there have been no resources available from CEIC or Indian Affairs. Because of this, funding for literacy programs on reserves has had to be channeled through the Department of the Secretary of State. This has proved burdensome, ineffective, and confusing for the programs. The lack of a clear cut and efficient provincial-federal relationship has made getting the funding to the programs a problem. In addition, the communities have no sense of control over their education which is directly contradictory to the principles of community literacy work.

3.1.7 Provincial organization of literacy practitioners (LWAM)

In February of 1988, the first conference of L.W.A.M. took place. This has been an effort to develop a network of literacy tutor and teachers to provide:

- A forum for exchanging ideas and information about teaching practice and programs;
- On-going support of workers in the field;
- Determination of training needs and the development of a training program;

- All literacy workers in programs, whether funded by A.C.E. or not, a chance to meet with others in the field.

The first meeting was well-attended. A board was constituted with regional representation.

3.1.8 Francophone literacy

A demonstration project involving three rural francophone communities was initiated in FY87-88. Through a provincial organization called Pluri-elles, community facilitators (animatrices) were identified and trained. As there is no provincial francophone literacy programs officer, it is hoped that the trained facilitators will form a nucleus of francophone literacy workers.

3.1.9 First language literacy

We have had enthusiastic responses from several Metis communities and aboriginal reserves about developing Cree and Ojibwe literacy. Learners are not only interested in preserving their languages but are excited about transmitting them through the medium of print. If we could capitalize on this energy, we feel, not only would students learn English more effectively and efficiently, but their pride in their own cultural heritage would also be reinforced.

4.0 FUTURE MULTI-PHASE LITERACY STRATEGY

Several lessons have been learned from past experiences, not only in Manitoba, but from the experiences in other provinces, the United States and most particularly from the United Kingdom, where there have been over ten years of an intensive literacy campaign.

Of particular note was the previously mentioned conference call between provincial government representatives responsible for adult literacy in the four western provinces, during which it became evident that, as discussed earlier, there are a number of ways in which literacy in Manitoba has taken a different path from that in other provinces. The issue which gave impetus for the call was the recent decision by the Department of the Secretary of State to make adult literacy part of its mandate, a decision which caused extremely difficult situations for provincial literacy staff in each of the four provinces.

It was interesting to find, however, that the flexibility which Manitoba has enjoyed has led to the development of several unique thrusts which other provinces have recognized and which are now forming a part of their provision: Learners Conferences; the use of video in community development; the development of an

inter-provincial tutor training manual and accompanying videos; the inclusion of language awareness as an integral part of training; and the training of aboriginal teachers to deliver programming. However, the funding allocated to adult literacy by each of the four provinces has been quite different: In Alberta, nearly $7M is allocated for adult literacy, of which $700.0 is exclusively for community literacy programs, while in Saskatchewan, almost $3M was committed to literacy.

Certain models of provision have emerged as successful, particularly in rural and remote communities, and it is these models which we hope to continue to support. Certain structures have also emerged from practice, and the development and support of a provincial infrastructure is critical at this time. The formation of a provincial advisory committee, comprised of stakeholders representing the various interests and organizations concerned with adult literacy would seem appropriate, in addition to supporting the nascent practitioners and learners organizations. As authority is devolved to these structures, the function of A.C.E. Branch can become largely coordinative so that the "ghettoization" of adult literacy as experienced in the U.K. can be avoided.

As experience and expertise have been gained, a clearer direction has emerged, the result of which is the plan submitted to Estimates (Appendix I). The overall strategy encompassed by the three phases of development is two-fold: the enrichment of those aspects and types of provision which have been demonstrably successful and, the development of increasing local control over adult education, with A.C.E. Branch performing an eventual coordinative function rather than the direct delivery it has of necessity, performed.

Much of the shape of programming has been learner- and community-determined, either directly or indirectly. It is the placement of the learner, within his or her community context, as central to the development of programming which has been the strength of literacy provision in Manitoba; an enlargement to present efforts is included in the plan. Moreover, an added strength has been the use of individuals within communities who, with appropriate training, have become an invaluable resource as teachers and coordinators. Therefore emphasis in the plan is given to extensive professional development at a variety of levels.

Each phase is intended to be incremental to the previous phase, so that activities of previous phases are repeated in subsequent phases, although the budgets for each phase reflect only the activities additional to a previous phase. In addition, successive phases are developmental and hence, speculative. While Phase I is largely refined and emerges from the lessons of previous years, Phases II and III are conceptual in nature and

would depend on the outcomes of initiatives in Phase I. It is the determination of the successive phases in which an on-going Provincial Literacy Coordinating Committee could play a substantive role.

In essence, the future of adult literacy provision in Manitoba is planned to focus on the following areas (which are areas determined as important by the Department of the Secretary of State, based on previous Manitoba priorities):

4.1 Community development

The determination of local issues and needs in cooperation with community leaders, so that direction, support and evaluation of programs can be devised.

4.2 Organizing the program

Advising tutor/organizers about learner recruitment through the use of the video and other publicity materials provided by the A.C.E. Branch or developed within the community. Aiding in the identification of appropriate teachers and facilities which will provide the optimum learning environment for individuals.

4.3 Supporting the tutor/teachers(s)

Piloting, in cooperation with organizers, learners and teachers, the Good Practice Guide and Student Evaluation profile, both of which have been developed by the A.C.E. Branch. In addition, supervising and advising individual teachers/tutors during regular visits to programs. The professional development of teachers/tutors will include:

- Piloting the intensive initial training in Teaching Literacy to Adults;
- Offering local and regional training events;
- Identifying training needs from the field and offering a range of experiences;
- Developing further the Language Awareness Course and piloting it in several communities;
- Developing the apprenticeship model of training for tutors/teachers from remote and isolated communities;
- Continuing close cooperation with the provincial practitioners organization, L.W.A.M.

4.4 Involving learners

Aiding in the planning and implementation of the annual Learners Conference and the development of a learners' network through regional conferences and workshops. In addition, working with learners to publish learners' writing which can be made available as print material to programs.

4.5 Materials, curriculum and resource development

Distributing published materials of use in programs as well as developing and publishing practitioner- and learner-produced materials found to be needed but not commercially available such as:

- Cree, Ojibway and Sioux literacy materials;
- A "Stimulating Writing" package for use in literacy programs;
- Language awareness materials;
- Numeracy, social studies and science materials for use in literacy programs

4.6 Cooperation with other providers, agencies and educational institutions

Helping to build local infrastructures as well as developing and integrating cooperative programming with community colleges, school divisions, and other community resources so that learners are provided with a full range of educational programming appropriate to their needs.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

5.1 Funding

Because of the fragile nature of new educational programming in the communities, we would highly recommend that funding for community literacy programs be authorized for longer terms (.e.g three or five year programs). This would enable programs to develop a stable team of workers and would allow students to feel their progress in literacy is truly based on their needs and abilities.

5.2 Expanded provision

The need and effectiveness of community-based literacy programs is well known and documented. Programs currently funded by the Department of Education are part-time and short term. Both learners and the communities are requesting more provision (e..g hours available as well as more tutors) Because of the limited funding currently available to develop this work, the needs of very few communities can be met.

5.3 Expanded training

The need for on-going training for workers in the field has also been demonstrated. Tutors and teachers need to increase their own expertise, understand current thinking and research about literacy theory and practice, and develop new skills to improve their own practice.

Professional development should include the possibility of academic recognition of these skills so that workers can consider making adult literacy work a viable career choice. Unless we offer substantial recognized training, we cannot build a stable, experienced and knowledgeable team of workers in the province.

5.4 Expanded curriculum and materials

The development of Native language literacy should be an important educational aim for literacy programs. Learners whose first language is not English should be offered opportunities to explore print in their first language. This is not only ethically appropriate but educationally sound. We recognize that the struggle to identify an appropriate orthography for each community may be difficult, but we feel the results will be well worth the effort.

5.5 Development of a coordinated approach

There needs to be an approach to adult education which does not treat the provision of literacy as a discrete area of concern. The integrated and holistic way in which knowledge is

acquired needs to be reflected in the structure of provision. Moreover, the lesson to be learned from the experiences of the U.K. is the ineffectiveness, both individually and socially, of rigid definitions of what constitutes literacy provision. If the approach is one which takes into account the subjective understanding of the adult learner, rather than only an objective definition (predicated on a proxy variable such as educational attainment) then a truly integrated approach can be achieved.

5.6 Development of appropriate evaluation measures

The need for easily administered, culturally fair and humane learning and program evaluation measures has been an issue in educational practice for a long time. It is a particularly critical issue in adult literacy work. The A.C.E. Branch has developed and piloted several types of evaluation, some of which have been successful at gathering information of use to teachers/tutors, learners and funders. In addition, diagnostic testing and assessment procedures have been inserviced with small groups of advanced practitioners, but as yet, we have been unable, due to time constraints, to develop a more comprehensive system of evaluation which will form an integral part of all program development and delivery.

CONCLUSIONS

Manitoba is in a unique position in Canada to develop a teaching/learning model of adult education which could be an example for other provinces. We can use the experience which has been assimilated from previous attempts to develop community literacy programs to expand and deliver truly meaningful educational opportunities to learners who are marginalized in contemporary society.

MULTI-PHASE LITERACY STRATEGY FOR MANITOBA **APPENDIX I**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Manitoba has, in the past four years, developed a successful community-based approach (3 programs are urban based; 10 are located in rural and remote communities) to adult literacy programming with the following unique characteristics:

- it involves the community in the development, organization and evaluation of the program, and is learner-centered;
- it is committed to sound principles of adult literacy which place emphasis on quality instruction, delivered by appropriately trained practitioners, and upon adult-based learning, where the student has much control of the learning process;
- it is delivered by a team of paid part-time trained workers; and
- there is a high participation rate by aboriginal adults. The illiteracy rate in this community is significantly higher than among other groups.

This approach demands that there be experienced community workers as well as expert literacy trainers, as part of the organizational team to develop literacy work.

The Manitoba experience, developed and based primarily in rural communities, has provided a clear direction, which has been incorporated into an overall strategy, encompassed by three phases of development. The first phase provides for expansion of existing programs, to ensure that: each is of sufficient length (40 weeks rather than current 20 weeks), that appropriate program supports are in place, the necessary staff training is provided by the Department; and that coordination and evaluation of all programs is completed.

The second phase builds upon the first, with additional programs being developed in new communities. As well, infrastructure will be expanded, linkages to other post-secondary programs established, and innovative demonstration projects developed.

Phase three includes additional new programs, an emphasis on the development of more learning materials and upon professional development for practitioners.

Adult literacy is an emerging field. The establishment of a provincial coordinating committee in the early stages of this strategy will ensure sustained input from residents throughout the province. It will also allow for broad-based consultation and input to the long-term planning required to ensure that the Manitoba strategy remains dynamic and responsive to the needs of adult Manitobans.

MULTI-PHASE LITERACY STRATEGY FOR MANITOBA

This proposal outlines a three-year strategy for adult literacy provision in Manitoba. For the past four years, the focus of literacy development in Manitoba has largely been on the provision of small grants to communities which, with training delivered by the Adult and Continuing Education Branch of PACE, were able to deliver programming appropriate to the community within the community. In addition to the provision of grants and training, A.C.E. Branch organized Learners Conferences and assisted in the development of a provincial network of practitioners. Hence, the enclosed proposal is the result of consultation, both formal and informal, with learners, practitioners and providers.

Several lessons have also been learned from past experiences, not only in Manitoba, but from the experiences in other provinces, the United States and most particularly from the United Kingdom where there have been over ten years of an intensive literacy campaign.

Of particular note was a conference call between provincial government representatives responsible for adult literacy in the four western provinces, during which, it became evident that there are a number of ways in which literacy in Manitoba has taken a different path from that in other provinces. The issue which gave impetus for the call was the recent decision by the Department of the Secretary of State to make adult literacy part of its mandate, a decision which caused extremely difficult situations for provincial literacy staff in each of the four provinces. It was interesting to find, however, that the flexibility which Manitoba has enjoyed has led to the development of several unique thrusts which other provinces have recognized and which are now forming a part of their provision: Learners Conferences; the use of video in community development; the development of an inter-provincial tutor training manual and accompanying videos; the inclusion of language awareness as an integral part of training; and the training of aboriginal teachers to deliver programming. However, the funding allocated to adult literacy by each of the four provinces has been quite different: In Alberta, nearly $7M is allocated for adult literacy, of which $700.0 is exclusively for community literacy programs, while in Saskatchewan, almost $3M was committed to literacy. Only British Columbia spent less than Manitoba, allocating $100.0.

As experience and expertise have been gained, a clearer direction has emerged, the result of which is this plan. The overall strategy encompassed by the three phases of development is two-fold: the enrichment of those aspects and types of provision which have been demonstrably successful and, the development of increasing local control over adult education, with A.C.E. Branch performing an eventual coordinative function rather than the direct delivery it has of necessity, performed.

Much of the shape of programming has been learner - and community-determined, either directly or indirectly. It is the placement of the learner, within his or her community context, as central to the development of programming which has been the strength of literacy provision in Manitoba; an enlargement to present efforts is included in the plan. Moreover, an added strength has been the use of individuals within communities who, with appropriate training, have become an invaluable resource as teachers and coordinators. Therefore emphasis in the plan is given to extensive professional development at a variety of levels. Certain models of provision have emerged as successful, particularly in rural and remote communities, and it is these models which we hope to continue to support.

Certain structures have also emerged from practice, and the development and support of a provincial infrastructure is critical at this time. The formation of a provincial advisory committee, comprised of stakeholders representing the various interests and organizations concerned with adult literacy would seem appropriate, in addition to supporting the nascent practitioners and learners organizations. As authority is devolved to these structures, the function of A.C.E. Branch can become largely coordinative so that the "ghettoization" of adult literacy as experienced in the U.K. can be avoided.

Each phase is intended to be incremental to the previous phase, so that activities of previous phases are repeated in subsequent phases, although the budgets for each phase reflect only the activities additional to a previous phase. In addition, successive phases are developmental and hence, speculative. While Phase I is largely refined and emerges from the lessons of previous years, Phases II and III are conceptual in nature and would depend on the outcomes of initiatives in Phase I. It is the determination of the successive phases in which an on-going Provincial Literacy Coordinating Committee could play a substantive role.

ADULT ILLITERACY IN CANADA: COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION. 1988. MANITOBA SUBMISSION

The province's policy to date has been to provide funding to community groups, school divisions and colleges for literacy and adult basic education programming for priority groups. Responsibility for grant allocations, training, professional development, curriculum development and adult literacy rests with the Adult and Continuing Education Branch, Manitoba Education. Policy refinement is now being considered, and a new policy is expected to be adopted before the end of 1987.

In view of widely varying needs of adult learners, no effort has been made to develop an official definition of illiteracy. The Unesco less-than-Grade-9 criterion is recognized as being a normative definition only. A de facto definition is adults with less than Grade 6, since ABE is provided by colleges through CEIC funding for adults with Grade 7 or higher. In practice, many programs respond to the felt needs of the learner, without undue rigidity concerning grade levels.

The provincial government, in collaboration with communities, has endeavored to provide suitable models of literacy provision and to train literacy tutors. It has also initiated and developed a community of learners, so that they might have greater control over the structure and content of the services provided.

PROVISION OF PROGRAMS

Most literacy programming is delivered by community groups. It is not ABE - not classroom-based, semestered, or institutionalized. Instead, serious efforts have been made to design models appropriate for the needs of the adult learner. These include:

1) **Independent Learning Centres**, in such places as Selkirk, Brandon, Winnipeg and The Pas. These utilize New Initiatives Program (NIP) grants and offer flexible and individual learning for adults at differing ability levels.

2) **Volunteer Paid Tutoring Programs**, by which school divisions, colleges and community groups hire a part-time coordinator through NIP grants. The coordinator then recruits volunteers to tutor on a one-to-one basis. Tutor-training, manuals and publicity materials are provided.

The volunteer tutor model, which is basically a white middle class concept, has however proved inappropriate for some of the more isolated rural communities, and modified approaches have been tried. These include a part-time coordinator who delivers literacy programs to small groups. A second approach utilizes a paid part-time coordinator/teacher and paid part-time tutors to

teach in a one-to-one relationship or in small groups. Both of the models have been successful, in that they provide income, lead to more commitment by tutors and enhanced self-worth, and permit more effective control by the coordinator and the branch.

The Community Role

The province recognizes the value of literacy provision being carried out by community members themselves, and in the metis community of Camperville, there has been an innovative and successful program in which the literate younger members of the community have provided literacy teaching for the elders.

The emphasis on the community was further developed by the March 1986 First Manitoba Learners Conference, which brought together representatives from practically all literacy programs within the province. The conference was extremely successful and has resulted in increased learner participation in curricula and materials development and other self-help initiatives. The Learners Conference has become an annual event.

Within the Adult and Continuing Education Branch (ACE), the Literacy Programs Officer is responsible for ongoing teacher - and tutor-training, together with funding and policy matters. Data is collected through evaluation forms for each program receiving ACE funding. More qualitative information concerning student issues, problems and needs is available from the annual Learners Conference, and used as a basis for ACE Branch program decisions.

To date, no funding support exists for part-time students, although there is limited help through CEIC, social assistance and student finance for full-time literacy students.

Major Needs and Plans

To strengthen the program, several major needs have been identified by provincial authorities as needing to be addressed. One is for more and better literacy materials. There are as yet few materials for basic literacy students, although efforts are under way to provide and make available through a distribution network collections of adult education materials. An inter-provincial manual and accompanying video tapes are also under production and will be available in the fall of 1987.

A second major need identified is for more staff trained in literacy work. Initial efforts to develop more professionally qualified literacy instructors have been made through workshops and short training courses. A provincial organization of adult literacy practitioners has recently been formed called the Literacy Workers Alliance of Manitoba.

Future plans include changes in structure and duration of funding to match program models more appropriately; possible tutor

certification; intense professional development of native teachers through a 3-week Language Institute; refinement of literacy policy; introduction of adult education councils; distribution and in-service inter-provincial tutor-training manual and accompanying video tapes, and improvement of curricula and materials with regard to learner needs.

APPENDIX III

VOLUNTEERS AND LITERACY WORK

Historical Background

In the past, literacy programs have been developed either through adult basic education classes, through CEIC-funded programs at community colleges, or through volunteer one-to-one tutoring schemes. The experiences of using extensive volunteers in literacy has obvious attractive qualities which include: reducing the expense of delivery involving large numbers of the community in providing a needed service, and providing a personal service for large numbers of students. However, once the work has developed, the disadvantages of using only volunteers have outnumbered the initial advantages. In both the USA and the UK, the wide-ranging use of volunteers has declined because of the realities of literacy teaching.

Literacy Work and the Appropriate Delivery to Students

Very quickly in literacy work, the disadvantages of using volunteers became clear. These included: lack of professionalism of volunteers, difficulty in providing ongoing training, tendency of programs to exploit volunteers, negative influences of over-dependency in one-to-one teaching situations and the limitations that one-to-one teaching provides, problems of maintaining a permanent staff of volunteers, and the disparity of tutor-student match which increases the alienation of learner and tutor.

Professionalism

It became apparent that literacy work included more than merely sitting with a student and showing him/her how to read. The targetted groups in adult literacy are the most disadvantaged in our society. These students suffer not only educational disadvantages but have suffered racial discrimination plus all economic and social problems inherent in being poor.

Literacy workers therefore, are expected not only to have a thorough understanding of the reading process, but to cope with a student population with multiple needs. Helping people not only develop literacy, but change their lives cannot be done solely by inexperienced, untrained helpers.

In addition, the wide range of educational needs which students exhibited included not only learning to read but the ability to use mathematics in their daily lives and to write and spell according to their needs. We could not expect literacy volunteers to have the necessary teaching skills to cope with these demands.

To demand that volunteers undertake extensive training is exploitative in terms of their free offer of time and also unrealistic in terms of their commitment to the work. Although some volunteers are willing to undertake considerable training, we cannot make this a criteria for doing volunteer work.

Problems of Using Volunteers

Although initially, due to embarrassment or negative school experiences, many students need one-to-one teaching, this model ceases being valuable as the only one available to students.

Too often both students and volunteer become over dependent on one another, goals or aims are unrealistically set, and the emotional relationship becomes more important than the learning milieu.

The development of group work literacy has shown the enormous value of interacting with other students to stimulate one another, compare like experiences and reduce feelings of inadequacy. It also opens up avenues for personal and educational developmnt. Students become supportive to one another and thus begin the road to independent learning.

Inappropriate Use of Volunteers

All research on volunteering shows that the most majority of volunteers are white, middle-class, middle aged women.

In Manitoba, volunteer services are likely to be operable only in cities or large towns. In rural or native communities, volunteer programs are rarely successful and thus, this model should not be considered when embarking on developing literacy programs in these areas.

Even in many inner-city programs volunteers are not recommended due to the difficulty of finding appropriate volunteer-student matches.

How Can We Use Volunteers

Recent research into volunteer programs has indicated most success has been generated when:

- a stable cadre of students and teachers exists;
- a paid coordinator provides support, training and supervision of the tutor-pairs;
- the targetted student population is 'upwardly mobile', stable and employed;
- the volunteer tutors have had some teacher-training experience; or
- the volunteer tutors have been highly selected based on their attitudes, personal knowledge, openness to educational ideas and methods.

It is evident that volunteers in literacy work can only be utilized in specific ways:

a) if the literacy program is located in a large town or city where a sizable volunteer community is found;
b) volunteers are carefully selected and matched with learners;
c) volunteers are supervised by a professional coordinator and are offered regular training opportunities;
d) volunteers are willing and able to undertake a fairly long and consistent commitment to the work;
e) as an adjunct to group instruction, e.g. to develop independent learning centres.

Appendix IV

1987-88 ADULT and CONTINUING EDUCATION LITERACY PROJECTS

The Pas Friendship Centre - an extension of the current literacy program to include job search skills. Small group and individualized instruction.

Birch River School - Part-time literacy, basic math, language, and upgrading programs. Small group and tutorial.

Brandon Friendship Centre Inc. - Part-time program designed to help those adults who want further education through the community college or university system, or who want to find employment.

Manitoba Metis Federation S.W. - St. Lazare - A community-based, community delivered adult literacy tutoring program for older adults who have had no previous schooling. This program has been expanded to include 3 communities - St. Lazare, Russell, and Binscarth. Small group work and individualized tutoring.

Journeys Literacy Program - Individualized instruction, offered on a part-time basis to students whose range of ability is from a beginning literacy level to grade 12. Job skills, life skills and high school completion are integrated into the program.

Thompson Reading Aides Council - The project is a one-to-one volunteer literacy outreach tutoring program designed to assist primarily Native adults in the Thompson region.

Salvation Army - Social Service Centre (Winnipeg) - A part-time literacy and upgrading program providing individual and small group instruction to local core area residents.

Winnipeg Adult Education Centre - The project is designed to develop relevant, meaningful resource for adult students with limited literacy skills who wish to prepare for entry to high school credit programs offered at WAEC. This includes reading, writing, spelling, basic math, science and an introduction to computers. Classroom-based individualized learning.

Camperville Adult Education Committee - One-to-one tutors provide basic literacy training on a part-time basis and the development of learning materials for Metis people. Includes Camperville/Duck Bay area.

Dauphin Friendship Centre - Basic literacy taught in small groups with tutorial follow-up. Designed to upgrade individuals to a grade seven reading level whereby they will be eligible for further training through community college and/or Parkland Human Resource Centre. Many participants will be referred by Dauphin Correctional Institute.

Lord Selkirk School Division No. 11 - Continuation of present upgrading program, designed to upgrade math and communication skills to a grade 9 level. Individualized and small group instruction. Tutorials for basic literacy.

Manitoba Metis Federation S.E. Region - Powerview - Part-time upgrading program in Powerview to improve reading, writing and math skills. Individualized instruction.

Pluri-Elles (Man.) Inc. - Program for Franco-Manitoban women designed to improve French grammar (both written and oral) skills. Small group instruction.

Brokenhead Educational Authority - Scanterbury - Upgrading program to prepare participants for GED and college entrance. Classroom-based instruction. Status, non-status, and Metis people are participating.

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

LITERACY PROGRAMS

- Waterhen
- Waywayseecappo
- Sioux Valley
- Crane River
- Grand Rapids
- Norway House
- Garden Hill
- Cross Lake
- K.N.O.W. the Facts, Manitoba

PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

. Popular Theatre Alliance of Manitoba - To facilitate and organize 1988 Learners Conference

. Literacy Workers Alliance of Manitoba - To establish the organization

APPENDIX V

MANITOBA LEARNERS CONFERENCE

Background

For the past three years, the Adult and Continuing Education (A.C.E.) branch has sponsored a Learners Conference. In addition to A.C.E. branch, financial contributions towards the conference have been made by Core Area Initiative and Secretary of State. Each year between 150 and 200 learners from all over the province have attended the conference. The purpose of the conferences has been two-fold:

1) To involve learners in the consultation process concerning development in the field and assessment of their needs;

2) To provide a forum for students from all over the province to exchange ideas and experiences, tackle mutual issues, identify educational needs and gain new insight and learning.

The concept of learner involvement in negotiating the curriculum and identifying needs is well established in theories of literacy work. If we truly believe in these concepts, unless they are put into action, we cannot expect either tutors or students to follow them.

PROCESS OF THE CONFERENCES

The success of the conferences has depended heavily on two factors:

a) Conference topics which are appropriate to identified needs and goals of the learners;

b) A conference format which is experientially-based and involves the learners in the learning process.

The conferences have been held in Winnipeg at central locations. All the costs of attendance at the conference (including travel, accommodation, food, and childcare allowance) have been provided by the sponsors. The conference then becomes accessible for all learners and not just those in Winnipeg.

Before each conference a needs assessment of the learners in literacy programs has been undertaken by a community development worker employed by A.C.E. Because drama, role play, and communication skills are highly utilized at the conferences, facilitators from the Popular Theatre Alliance have been contracted to help plan and organize the activities.

Themes of the Conferences

Over the years, the themes of the conferences have changed as the learners have identified different areas of concern. Thus, the themes of the conferences have developed as learners take a more active part in their learning programs and lives. The themes for the conferences have been:

1986 - Being Invisible

Students examined what experiences had influenced their prior education, what had brought them back to learn and what needed to be changed in the future so that they might continue to learn. They worked in small and large groups, identifying some concrete situations in their programs and possible solutions which they could achieve.

1987 - Getting it Together

The conference began with learners identifying common needs. They then practiced some skills for making representation on their own behalf for funding, services, increased access, etc. The Minister of Education attended this conference and students from a number of different groups posed questions they had developed in small groups to him about their educational needs.

1988 - Taking Action

A number of groups were formed in this conference which targetted a range of skills learners had identified as ones which they wanted to acquire. These included such diverse activites as using the media, using song, lobbying, getting into print, incorporating and becoming a board, etc. A newsletter about the conference and student comments on it has recently been printed, of which a copy is enclosed.

Evaluation and the future

Through the experiences of the Learners Conferences, students have gained in the ability to share their experiences and develop talents and skills. One example of the how the conferences have fostered further development has been demonstrated by students from the Journeys Adult Education program. These students have taken three years to write and produce a play about their experiences on welfare called "Under the Line." Students presented the play to the Learners Conference in March 1988 and will be offering further performances later this year. The original inspiration for the play came out of the 1986 Learner's Conference.

The development of student writing for publication has also stemmed from the Learners' Conferences. At the present time, students from the Journeys program are gathering writing from learners around the province to include in a collection of student writing. Students at the conferences have expressed both the desire to share experiences with other students and also the need to produce relevant materials for learners to develop their skills.

Students have completed evaluations for all the conferences. These evaluations, plus the needs assessments done prior to the conferences have been the most important factors concerning the success of the conferences. The students have determined both the themes and format of the conferences; however, they have not yet been actively involved in the planning and facilitation of the conferences.

In the next few years, we hope to involve students fully so that they assume control of the planning and execution of the conference. It is hoped that by 1990, The International Year of Literacy, the Learners Conference will be run entirely by students from literacy programs around the province. We hope to provide local and/or regional conferences prior to the annual central conference so that these skills can be developed throughout the year and not just through a short term experience.

APPENDIX VI

LANGUAGE VARIETY AND STANDARD ENGLISH

For many "under-achieving" students, especially those with Native or Metis backgrounds, one essential block to academic or educational success is insufficient command of Standard Canadian English. To be academically successful, the student must not only be able to write using the academic format but also must have sufficient experience to write in a variety of English which is substantially close to Standard Canadian English. These students fail because they lack agility in translating spoken English forms into the formal English style demanded in higher education, not because they lack intelligence or understanding of the content of material.

By looking more closely at how the language works, not through a conventional grammatical approach but through linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis, students can better understand their academic writing problems and find solutions to them.

Rules and Language

All languages have grammars or "rules". Rules (or language conventions) exist whether the language is a pidgin, creole, or standardized version of a spoken language. Language learning in the mother tongue (or the language of the family into which an individual is born) is always unconsciously learned. Because it is unconsciously learned, we often believe that our own language does not have rules. We invariably believe that unfamiliar languages or dialects of our own language do not have rules. If these other varieties are at variance with our own codes, we often feel they are substandard or are not using the correct rules.

These attitudes about language and spoken varieties are evident in the educational system, attitudes of government and those in power, and ultimately communities themselves. One version of a spoken variety becomes the Standard version. All other versions are seen as distinctly inferior. **This is a power judgment and not one based on linguistic evidence.**

Nonetheless, many students whose spoken variety of English is not close to the standard variety conclude that their spoken English is poor or lacking in correctness; that they speak "broken" English. Thus, unconsciously they believe their mother tongue is inferior to that spoken by the power system.

Standard Canadian English

Standard Canadian English (SCE) is that style of usage which has developed as the official language of the state. Its original source came out of the government/bureaucratic usage of Southern England in the nineteenth century. The "correctness" of this version came out of the language usage employed by the people in power. As in England, the official language was one spoken predominantly by the upper and middle class who held the economic and political power at that time.

Linguists agree that no language form is innately better or more valuable than another. However, the people in power are those who establish public education systems. Their language is the one that is promoted as valuable. Therefore, when people want access to that power system, they must be fluent in the language of that system.

Language Awareness

Students whose spoken variety of English deviates significantly from that offered as the standard will have a harder time fluently using the written standard form accurately. Students may have difficulty understanding the differences between their version (which is English) and the standard version (which is also English). Therefore, students are likely to have problems identifying errors and correcting them. Unless the student is talented linguistically, s/he will not make unconscious switches into the standard variety. Even if students learn to write in the standard variety, their internalized language may be substantially different from the standard version.

The purpose of a language awareness curriculum is to make language and language conventions conscious. The student will analyze and compare the varieties of the spoken language to the variety offered as the standard. The student will be required to analyze the differences between the spoken variety and the standard variety. Once these differences are made conscious the student can learn ways of self-correcting and reducing errors.

The object is not to change the student's spoken English but to impact their control of the written medium they are trying to utilize. Thus, the student's mother tongue (or variety of English) needs to be valued and examined for its richness and potential contribution to the development of the language.

The language awareness curriculum should include (among other things):

- an examination of a number of varieties of English (e.g. Afro-Caribbean creoles, Cockney, Australian, local varieties);

- an exposure to literature in the mother tongue;

- a study of the history of English and the impact other cultures have had on its development;

- a study of the history of colonization and the administration of official language policies;

- an analysis of local languages(e,g, Cree, Ojibway, etc.) and English varieties so that students can begin to identify their errors in SCE.